HONITON TOWN COUNCIL.

Annual Report of the Medical Officer of Health, For 1918.

May, 1919.

GENTLEMEN,

I beg to submit for your consideration my Report for the year ending December 31st, 1918. In accordance with the circular Instructions of the Local Government Board, of January, 1919, the Report is brief in character, and deals essentially with the Vital Statistics for the year.

BIRTHS.

The total number of Births registered during the year was 40, of which 16 were Male and 24 were Female Births.

Included in this number there were 4 cases of Illegitimate Birth.

The Birth Rate, based on an estimated Total Population of 3027, is 13·2 per 1000. You will observe that this Rate is the lowest Birth Rate on record, and is considerably lower than the Death Rate for the year.

The following table shews the comparative Birth Rates per 1000 of the population.

	1916	1917	1918
Honiton	14·4	13·8	13·2
Devon County (Combined Urban Districts)	14·8	12·4	
England and Wales	21·6	17·8	17·7

DEATHS.

The Death Rate is based on an estimated Civilian Population of 2702. After the elimination of the transferable Deaths which occurred chiefly in the Union Infirmary, the total number of Deaths registered in the District was 47, giving a Death Rate of 17·4 per 1000. A Rate practically equal to the corresponding General Rate for England and Wales for the year.

The comparative Death Rates per 1000 are as below:

	1916	1917	1918
Honiton	14·3	13·9	17·4
Devon County (Combined Urban Districts)	15·9	17·2	
England and Wales	14·0	14·4	17·6

Analysis of Causes of Death (1918).

Influenza	5
Pneumonia	5
Bronchitis	1
Other Respiratory Diseases	2
Organic Heart Disease	3
Nephritis and Bright's Disease	3
Appendicitis	1
Premature Birth	1
Diphtheria	1
Pulmonary Tuberculosis	4
Cancer	4
Other Defined Diseases	17
Total	47

The number of Deaths due to Tubercle, was identical with the number due to Cancer, giving a Death Rate of 1·5 per 1000 of the Population, in each case.

This rate (1·5) is also identical with the corresponding rate for the Administrative County for 1917, the County Rate for 1918 is not yet available.

INFANTILE MORTALITY.

There were two cases of Death during the first year of life. One was a case of Premature Birth, surviving only a few hours. The second was a case of Death due to Pneumonia at the age of nine months.

There was no Mortality among the illegitimate children.

The Infantile Death Rate is 50 per 1000 Births. Other Infantile Mortality Rates being as below:

	1916	1917	1918
Honiton, per 1000 Births	Nil	75	50
Devon County (Combined Urban Districts) per 1000 Births	74·4	77	
England and Wales	91	97	97

NOTIFIABLE DISEASES.

The following cases were notified during the year:

Measles	4
Diphtheria	2
Infantile Ophthalmia	1
Tubercle of Lungs	6

Again, as in the previous year, there was no case of Scarlet Fever or of Typhoid Fever.

Of the two cases of Diphtheria the first was mild in type, and the accommodation was sufficient for isolation; the second case, which proved fatal was of a virulent type, and removal to Hospital was inexpedient on account of the condition of the patient. Although in this instance, four other children remained resident in the affected house, there was no second case of the Disease and no extension to any other house.

Six cases of Tubercle of the Lungs were notified, as compared with three cases in the previous year. Of the six cases, two were represented by visitors in the District. In three cases, the termination of the Disease has since been fatal.

It may be noticed that the total number of cases of Notifiable Infectious Disease is small, and well below the average number.

At no period of the year was there anything of the nature of a serious outbreak.

The Non-Notifiable Infectious Diseases were represented chiefly by Influenza and Whooping Cough. The epidemic of Influenza which was general throughout the Country in the latter part of the year, was particularly in evidence in this District between the middle of October and the middle of November. The cases were very numerous and shewed the usual tendency to Pulmonary complications. Ten Deaths were registered as due to Influenza or Pneumonia, or to both Diseases in combination.

The School was closed on account of the epidemic of Influenza, for three weeks ending November 9th. The Infant School was also closed from November 18th until the end of the term, on account of the prevalence of Whooping Cough.

The **Maternity Work** has been satisfactory. About half of the total number of cases were attended by the Staff of the District Nursing Association. There were no cases of Puerperal Fever. One case of Infantile Ophthalmia was notified.

The **General Sanitary** condition of the District has been good. There was no prevalence of Zymotic Disease during the summer and autumn months.

The necessity for increased **Housing Accommodation** is very obvious and urgent. There is a considerable number of Houses in the District which are not adequate for the purposes for which they are used, and which are particularly unsuitable as residences for children and young families.

I sub-join the Report of the Sanitary Inspector, and remain

Your obedient servant,

A. E. ASH, M.D.

SANITARY INSPECTOR'S REPORT, 1918.

SANITARY CONDITION OF DISTRICT.

NUISANCES.

During the year 1918, the number of nuisances dealt with and abated was	15
Insanitary yard paving and defective gulleys	4
Defective drains repaired	6
Defective sewers	2
Cases of overcrowding	0
Other nuisances abated	3

SANITARY WORK.

Houses disinfected	5
Schools disinfected	1
Old houses renovated	4
Old houses provided with new drains	4

NATIONAL SCHOOLS.

These are well kept, the sanitary condition and water supply good.

The dairies, milkshops and cowsheds in the District have been visited and found to be kept in a sanitary condition.

No samples of food have been taken for analysis, but 5 seizures of unsound fish, meat, &c., have been made.

The factories, workshops, and work places in the District have been visited and are satisfactory.

Inspections have been made of the bakehouses and slaughter houses and they have been found in a satisfactory condition.

Common Lodging Houses. There are two in the District, nothing occurred to necessitate official interference.

During the past year the question of the housing of the working classes has become acute, no new houses have been erected during the war, and now that the men are returning from Military Service it is very difficult to find cottages.

The Town Council has taken the matter in hand, and a site has been selected. It is proposed to erect 26 cottages at once and more later if required.

During the year I have visited several cases of old people living in cottages by themselves, it is impossible for them to keep the house clean and sometimes conditions have been very insanitary. It is regretable that we have no power to adequately deal with a situation of this kind.

A. J. REDFERN,

Sanitary Inspector (pro tem).

Honiton Town Council.

REPORT

OF THE

Medical Officer of Health

FOR 1918.

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